

Preventing Avian and Pandemic Influenza

A Global Framework for Preparedness, Response, and Containment Through Communication, Surveillance, and Detection

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U.S. Government Collaboration

The U.S. Government is increasingly concerned about the highly infectious strain of avian influenza known as H5N1. This strain of the virus has resulted in the need to destroy more than 140 million birds across Asia, threatening the livelihoods of poultry farmers in the 15 affected countries. As of October 24, 2005, there have been 121 confirmed cases in humans resulting in 62 deaths. The virus has spread outside of Southeast Asia through wild migratory birds that have now infected domestic poultry in Russia, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe. To ensure global scientific and policy coordination, the United States is collaborating closely with eight international organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), and 88 foreign governments to address the situation through planning, greater monitoring, and full transparency in reporting and investigating avian influenza occurrences. The United States and these international partners have led global efforts to encourage countries to heighten surveillance for outbreaks in poultry and significant numbers of deaths in migratory birds and to rapidly introduce containment measures. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Departments of State, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Agriculture (USDA) are coordinating future international response measures on behalf of the White House with departments and agencies across the federal government.

Presidential Actions

On November 1, 2005, President George W. Bush outlined the national strategy to safeguard against the danger of avian and pandemic influenza and requested from Congress \$7.1 billion in emergency funding to immediately begin implementing this strategy. In particular, \$251 million of this request is to help the international community, including USAID, prevent and control the spread of avian influenza by training local medical personnel, expanding surveillance and testing capacity, creating preparedness plans, and conducting other vital actions to detect and contain outbreaks.

Less than six months earlier, on May 11, President Bush signed an emergency appropriations bill that contained \$25 million to prevent and control the spread of avian influenza. USAID, HHS, and USDA are currently implementing programs with these funds in Southeast Asia.

Further accelerating global readiness, President Bush recently announced the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza in his remarks to the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on September 14, 2005. The Partnership brings together key nations and international organizations to improve readiness by:

- Elevating the issue on national agendas
- Coordinating efforts among donor and affected nations
- Mobilizing and leveraging resources
- Increasing transparency in disease reporting and surveillance
- Building capacity to identify, contain, and respond to a pandemic influenza

All partners have endorsed a core set of principles focused on enhancing preparedness, prevention, response, and containment activities. The Partnership will build on and support ongoing domestic, bilateral, and multilateral avian and pandemic influenza programs. To view the core principles, visit <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2005/53865.htm>.

The USAID Response – Key Actions to Date

“The key to an early and rapid response is preparedness, dialogue, political commitment, and transparency. It is critical that we raise the profile of avian influenza to host governments. We must do all we can to help lead efforts to prevent and contain the spread of this critical virus.”

- USAID Administrator Andrew S. Natsios, *Letter to USAID Mission Directors*

USAID Administrator Andrew S. Natsios has declared avian influenza a top priority for the Agency and stressed the importance of an early and effective response. USAID is fully engaged in the U.S. Government's response to this threat by supporting prevention and containment efforts in affected countries and by working with developing nations around the globe to prepare for a possible pandemic. USAID is also working closely with international and private sector partners, including WHO and FAO, to ensure a well-coordinated and strategically sound response to this global threat.

USAID Funding for Avian Influenza Control, Prevention, and Preparedness

Southeast Asia

USAID has provided \$13.7 million to help prevent and contain avian influenza in Southeast Asia, where this epidemic has had the largest impact. Of this amount, \$10 million comes from the emergency appropriations bill signed by President Bush in May 2005, which contained \$25 million to prevent and control the spread of avian and pandemic influenza. Moving swiftly, USAID also reprogrammed an additional \$3.7 million of fiscal year 2005 funds to bolster ongoing efforts.

Vietnam	\$3.45 million
Indonesia	\$3.15 million
Cambodia	\$2.25 million
Laos	\$1.6 million
China	\$0.5 million
Regional	\$2.75 million
TOTAL	\$13.7 million

As of September 30, 2005

These funds are being used to contain the further spread of avian influenza in animal populations; reduce the risk of human infections; and support pandemic planning and preparedness at the country and regional levels. Key activities include strengthening disease surveillance and laboratory diagnosis; training and equipping rapid response teams; and conducting targeted communications campaigns to change behaviors that facilitate the spread of avian influenza in animals and place humans at risk.

To minimize the risk of further spread in animal populations:

- USAID dedicated \$6 million of this assistance for Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, and Vietnam to strengthen disease surveillance, laboratory diagnosis, and rapid containment of animal outbreaks in conjunction with FAO. This funding is supporting efforts to train and equip rapid response teams, conduct poultry vaccination campaigns, strengthen national planning and pandemic preparedness, and promote public awareness. Funds are also working to bolster training for animal handlers and laboratory staff and to help detect outbreaks more quickly.
- In conjunction with USDA and coordination with FAO, USAID provided \$1.5 million to supply expert technical assistance to contain and prevent animal outbreaks.

To reduce the risk of human infections:

- USAID dedicated \$2.85 million for communications campaigns in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, and Vietnam to reduce animal handling practices that place humans at risk and to engage private companies to provide additional resources and incentives for control efforts.
- With WHO, USAID committed more than \$1.6 million to enhance national planning efforts for avian influenza control and outbreak response and strengthen human disease surveillance systems and laboratories. This assistance also supports the office of the new United Nations coordinator for avian influenza who will lead the efforts of WHO, FAO, and other United Nations agencies.
- In Indonesia, USAID is working with the U.S. Navy's Medical Research Unit to increase technical assistance for surveillance and laboratory analysis.

To further support pandemic planning and preparedness:

- USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance has prepositioned personal protective gear in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam for use in containing animal and human outbreaks of H5N1 infections. As H5N1 avian influenza outbreaks have begun to expand in animal populations beyond Southeast Asia and thus continue to threaten to spark a human flu pandemic, USAID has expanded its focus to support activities in other regions of the world that could be at risk.

Numbers at a Glance

Country	Cumulative Human H5N1 Cases to Date (since Dec. 2003)	Most Recent Outbreak (Dec. 2004 to present)
Thailand	19 cases, 13 deaths	2 cases, 1 death
Vietnam	91 cases, 41 deaths	64 cases, 21 deaths
Cambodia	4 cases, 4 deaths	4 cases, 4 deaths
Indonesia	7 cases, 4 deaths	7 cases, 4 deaths
TOTAL	121 cases, 62 deaths	77 cases, 30 deaths

Source:WHO laboratory-confirmed cases as of October 24, 2005

Europe and Eurasia

Recent H5N1 outbreaks among animals in Russia, Kazakhstan, Romania, and other nations have underscored the immediate risks that avian influenza poses to the Europe and Eurasia region. USAID has quickly responded with its other U.S. Government colleagues by collaborating with governments and in-country partners, including FAO and WHO. USAID Missions are working to assess the readiness of countries in the region to respond to this threat and are providing technical assistance to develop and strengthen preparedness plans, conduct disease surveillance, and determine immediate needs to head off further outbreaks in the region.

Africa

In Africa, which could also be at risk of H5N1 outbreaks in animal populations due to bird migration from affected countries in Europe and Asia, USAID Missions are providing assistance to host governments to convene donors, establish task forces, and develop pandemic preparedness plans in cooperation with other U.S. Government agencies, FAO, and WHO. In addition, USAID is redirecting its disease surveillance program to include a strong focus on detecting and diagnosing avian influenza.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Through its 16 Missions in Latin America and the Caribbean, USAID is working with host governments and other partners to raise awareness and plan for a potential avian influenza pandemic. USAID Missions are working to assess the pandemic preparedness of host countries and are beginning technical consultations in cooperation with other U.S. Government agencies and the Pan American Health Organization.

Learn more about USAID's response to avian influenza by visiting http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/home/News/news_items/avian_influenza.html.